



AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AWARDS

2008 RESEARCH PRIORITY THEMES

The research priority themes for the 2008 Australian Development Research Awards are:

1. **Development Effectiveness**
2. **Disability**
3. **Economics**
4. **Education**
5. **Environment**
6. **Food Security**
7. **Gender**
8. **Governance and State Building**
9. **Health**

Each application must nominate a **single** AusAID research priority theme and address the development concerns outlined in the theme's description and eligibility criteria. Each theme outlines sub-themes that are of particular interest to AusAID, applicants **must** address one sub-theme as well.

Each application will only be assessed against the nominated AusAID research priority theme/sub-theme.

Each research priority theme - and in certain cases each sub-theme - gives an indication of the amount of funding available as well as the documents applicants should refer to when developing proposals.

All applicants should refer to the following document:

- *Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program - Why and How*, AusAID 2006.

1. DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Total Funding Pool: AUD 1,000,000 over three years including AUD 200,000 per year for up to three years for the **Absorptive Capacity** and **Data Quality** sub-themes and AUD 400,000 for one year for the **Enhancing the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Assistance** sub-theme.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding for up to three years will be considered under the **Absorptive Capacity** and **Data Quality** sub-themes

Funding for up to one year will be considered under the **Enhancing the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Assistance** sub-theme

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below

Sub-theme: Absorptive Capacity

- Identification of constraints, frameworks for analysis, and approaches for enhancing the capacity to absorb aid effectively to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Sub-theme: Data Quality

- Approaches to data collection in environments of weak statistical capacity

Sub-theme: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian assistance grant funding supports the conduct and dissemination of relevant, high quality, principled research that addresses critical knowledge and good practice gaps in humanitarian action and development activities. The research aligns with priorities of the aid program and the Humanitarian Action Plan, in particular the strengthening of Australia's humanitarian emergency response capacities and disaster risk management with multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral and community participation.

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Civil-military coordination in complex humanitarian situations
- Improving the impact of humanitarian action in health
- Disability and humanitarian assistance
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Gender in humanitarian action
- Strengthening the international humanitarian system
- Humanitarian reform
- Early recovery and long term development

2. DISABILITY

Total funding pool: AUD 300,000 per year for up to three years.

People with disabilities are often among the poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries. They face many barriers to full participation and an increased risk of social exclusion. This includes being unable to access education and health services, gain employment, or participate in decision making. Social exclusion is a major contributor to the level of poverty which people with disabilities experience. It has been argued that the targets set for the MDGs will not be achieved unless the process of development specifically targets people with disabilities. Although the linkages between poverty and disability are often noted, a systematic examination of the most pressing issues is required, and a valid evidence base for policy development needs to be established.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding for up to three years will be considered

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below

Sub-theme: Understanding the situation in our region

The Pacific is a priority region for AusAID engagement. However, there is incomplete information regarding the situation of people with disabilities at both the household and legislative level. Understanding the prevalence and causes of disabilities and the relationship between disability and poverty is necessary for making sound policy and programming decisions and measuring change over time.

Sub-theme: Measuring Effectiveness

Disability is a relative term and its measurement is beset with problems, including the lack of reliability and validity of measurement instruments, most of which are poorly standardised and produce non-comparable estimates. The lack of universally applied definitions of disability and standardised tools for monitoring and evaluating disability issues within development initiatives affects our capacity to measure the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Sub-theme: The economic benefits of inclusion

While valid moral and ethical rationale for the provision of support to people with disabilities is well established and accepted, an economic understanding of the benefits of inclusion and the costs of exclusion is not well understood. Economic analysis of disability to date - such as the costs of addressing or not addressing blindness for example - have supported subsequent investments in this area. However, little is known about the economic case for other common impairments or specific interventions such as inclusive education.

3. ECONOMICS

Total Funding Pool: AUD 1,000,000 per year for up to three years.

Economic progress is fundamental to reducing poverty and meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region. Achieving broad-based, sustainable growth in developing countries is of central importance to the Australian aid program. Research proposed under this theme should involve economic analysis that informs policy choices relevant to developing countries.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding for up to three years will be considered

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below

Sub-theme: Trade and Economic Integration

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Trade liberalisation and small island states
- Impact of trade liberalisation on women and women's enterprise
- Tourism
- Energy and resources
- Infrastructure for trade
- Lagging regions
- Labour mobility and remittances
- Regional economic architecture

Sub-theme: Poverty, Inequality and the MDGs

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Commodity prices and poverty
- Pro-poor growth
- MDGs in the Asia-Pacific
- Economics of service delivery
- Horizontal inequality (e.g. gender, ethnicity, disabilities etc)

Documentation applicants should be aware of:

The Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2007 (ADB - available at <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/MDG-Update-2007/default.asp>)

Gender Equity in Australia's Aid Program – Why and How (AusAID – available at http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender_policy.pdf)

Pacific Economic Survey 2008: Connecting the Region (AusAID – available at http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/pacific_economic_survey08.pdf)

4. EDUCATION

Total Funding pool: AUD 1,000,000 over three years.

Education is one of the highest impact development investments and AusAID has an increasing focus on education development assistance. Achieving the education MDGs and Education for All goals is central to securing social and economic development in developing countries. Basic education provides the skills for full participation in society, increases access to employment and other sources of income and opens up opportunities for further education. Women who are educated have smaller families and healthier, better educated children. Research consistently indicates that investment in girls' education is the single most effective way of achieving broader development objectives.

Eligibility Criteria:

Funding proposals of up to three years will be considered

Applicants **MUST** address the sub-theme below

Sub-theme: Reaching the Disadvantaged

Governments face formidable challenges in providing a quality education system from early childhood to secondary and tertiary levels. In promoting the MDGs, Australia's overseas aid program is giving increased attention to ensuring aid reaches the most vulnerable, and breaking down barriers that prevent people from participating in economic and social development. In the Asia-Pacific region over 26 million children have either never enrolled or have dropped out of primary school. Most of these are from very poor families, in remote communities, children living with HIV/AIDS, street children, working children, children with a disability or from minority groups.

Planning for education reform to improve access to education for poor, disadvantaged and remote area students must take into account emerging trends in education and the possibilities they provide. One example is the use and potential benefits of ICT. There is much discourse on the potential for ICT and distance learning to improve access to education. Despite many pilot projects there are few concrete examples of cost effective and sustainable use of ICT to improve access to education and to improve educational outcomes in developing countries.

Some examples of topics in this sub-theme include:

- Improving access to quality education for disadvantaged children
- School leadership, school clustering and school specialisation
- Effective use of ICT and open/distance learning in education service delivery, particularly in remote areas
- The role of and potential for non-formal education in developing countries
- Mechanisms to support teachers in remote locations
- Practical application of new educational trends and pedagogies
- Reaching the disadvantaged in fragile states

All topics in this sub-theme will need to demonstrate relevance to developing country contexts in the Asia-Pacific region.

5. ENVIRONMENT

Total Funding Pool: AUD 600,000 per year for up to three years. Including AUD 300,000 per year for up to three years for the **Climate Change** sub-theme and AUD 300,000 per year for up to three years for the **Water and Sanitation** sub-theme.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding for up to three years will be considered

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below

Sub-theme: Climate Change

Building the capacity of developing countries to effectively respond to the impacts of climate change is a long term process that will require sustained international technical support and financial assistance for many years.

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- **Generating Climate Information and Improving Awareness (including)**
 - Identifying policy-relevant information gaps
 - Undertaking activities that generate robust scientific information on present and future climate change impacts for a particular geographic area
 - Increasing awareness of present and future climate change impacts

- **Implementation of Adaptation Measures (including)**
 - Research into barriers which impede the implementation of ‘on the ground’ adaptation measures, including but not limited to the role of:
 - Community-based activities;
 - Links between vulnerability assessments and policy development;
 - Mainstreaming climate change in development planning;
 - Capacity constraints;
 - Private sector engagement; and
 - Multilateral funding mechanisms

Sub- theme: Water and Sanitation

The United Nations Human Development Report 2006 estimates that approximately 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean water and 2.6 billion suffer from inadequate sewerage. Dirty water and poor sanitation is the main contributing factor for the deaths of 5,000 children each day from diarrhoea. MDG Target 10 calls for halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2015 relative to 1990 levels. This target is also fundamental to the achievement of other MDGs. For example, lack of access to safe water and sanitation has serious implications for child and maternal health, participation in education and economic activities and gender equality. Access to safe water and sanitation therefore is a critical element of the Australian aid program.

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)
- Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Services
- Peri-urban Water Supply and Sanitation Services
- National Water Policy and Planning
- Building Human Resource Capacity in Institutions

6. FOOD SECURITY

Total Funding Pool: AUD 300,000 per year for up to three years.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding up to three years will be considered

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below.

Food prices have risen dramatically exacerbating the risk of food insecurity amongst the urban and rural poor, especially the landless. In poorer countries up to 90 per cent of household income is spent on food, forcing the poor to adopt coping strategies such as reducing food intake or selling productive assets, which can entrench poverty. Over 100 million people are at risk of being pushed deeper into poverty, negating the poverty gains of the last 10 years, and potentially contributing to social instability. Understanding the drivers of food insecurity to inform appropriate responses is critical to sustainable development.

Sub-theme: Market Systems Promoting Food Security

Some topics of interest under this sub theme include, but are not limited to:

- Underlying drivers of household vulnerability to food insecurity.
Discern the most significant drivers of food insecurity at a household and community level, ideally with case studies from Pacific and SE Asian countries. Consider issues of entitlements; sources of risk at household level – price, disease, other; productivity decline; globalisation and growth of supermarket power; market failures etc.
- Appropriate market-based mechanisms and instruments to promote food security amongst the poorest.
Exploring the constraints and potential of micro-insurance, warehouse receipts, forward markets, remittances, migration and other strategies to reduce the food security risks facing poor households, especially in the Pacific.
- Ensuring social protection instruments do not undermine market development.
A fundamental challenge and rich debate persists around how to effectively provide relief that is not market disabling i.e. recognises that poor people are part of a market system, and have tradeable assets (e.g. their labour), but may require temporary relief and related support to enable them to participate in development. Ideally develop an analytical framework, with case examples, to determine where and when certain social protection instruments are market enabling and to flag when they risk disabling sustainable development.

Sub-theme: Social Protection

Some topics of interest under this sub theme include, but are not limited to:

- The relative efficacy of different social protection instruments
Contextual comparisons of the array of different formal instruments and their effectiveness, with a focus on South East Asia.
- Understanding informal food security coping mechanisms and how best to reinforce these
In the Pacific and South East Asia

7. GENDER

Total Funding Pool: AUD 300,000 per year for up to two years.

The use of the 3 themes below should not indicate a preference for narrow research methodologies and outcomes. Holistic inter-disciplinary research that explores an issue from many angles and draws from numerous research traditions, as well as incorporating quantitative and qualitative approaches, will be looked upon favourably. However, applications should nominate one major sub-theme below.

Eligibility Criteria

Funding for up to two years will be considered

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below.

Sub-theme: Gender, Economic Development and Leadership

This research priority emphasises the need to improve the economic status of women to accelerate development, while recognising that the political and legal empowerment of women is essential for the fostering of functioning and effective states.

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Women in the informal and formal economies – status, barriers, opportunities
The costs of the continued economic disempowerment of women
- Women, men and gender issues in economic decision making, including in land, national resource management, climate change, food security and Information and Communication Technologies
- Women in conflict resolution, peacemaking and building – constraints and opportunities
- Women's and men's roles in modern leadership, including political, public sector, civil society and customary leadership; how to promote equitable leadership and support gender sensitive leadership by women and men

Sub-theme: Gender based violence

Gender based violence is a research priority that highlights the interconnectedness between issues such as the disempowerment of women, violence, health and justice.

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Lessons from traditional dispute resolution for dealing with gender based violence
- Support, recovery and healing systems for victims - strengths and weaknesses taking into account socio-cultural, economic and other diversity and enabling mechanisms for improving systems; working with perpetrators
- Multisectoral responses to violence; the role of the legal, justice, health and education sectors in addressing violence
- Men's experience and use of violence, and masculinities

Sub-theme: Gender equality in development work

This research priority is based around the growing awareness of the importance of ensuring that gender equality in development is not simply a 'women's issue' and that gender equality is central to effective development work.

Some examples of topics within this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Changing behaviour, changing attitudes, changing systems – what works and what doesn't in gender and development work; what can donors do, and how to effectively use conceptual frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Millennium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?
- What are the crucial data gaps in our region and how to support partner governments to collect data that is sex disaggregated and gender sensitive
- How to measure gender equality results effectively
- The importance of context and culture in gender and development work

Documentation applicants should be aware of:

AusAID Gender Equality Guidelines (AusAID – available at http://www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/gender_guidelines.cfm)

8. GOVERNANCE AND STATE BUILDING

Total Funding Pool: AUD 1,500,000 including AUD 500,000 for up to eighteen months for the **Better Governance and Leadership** sub-theme and AUD 500,000 for up to two years for the **Fragile States and Peace Building** sub-theme.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants **MUST** address one of the sub-themes below

Funding for up to eighteen months under the **Better Governance and Leadership** sub-theme will be considered

Proposals under the **Better Governance and Leadership** sub-theme must focus on one or more of the following seven priority countries – Cambodia, East Timor, Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

Funding for up to two years under the **Fragile States and Peace Building** sub-theme will be considered

With regards to **Fragile States and Peace Building** only countries scoring 3.2 or below on the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) index will be considered for study. The CPIA rates countries against a set of 16 criteria grouped in four clusters: (a) economic management; (b) structural policies; (c) policies for social inclusion and equity; and (d) public sector management and institutions. The World Bank's definition of fragile states covers low-income countries scoring 3.2 and below on the CPIA, which is the primary tool used to assess the quality of country policies and the main input to IDA's Performance-Based Allocation (PBA) system

Sub-theme: Better Governance and Leadership

*Building demand for better governance and leadership aims to help citizens **participate in decisions that affect their lives and to promote the accountability of government and other institutions**. Good governance allows citizens and communities to share the benefits of economic growth, stability and development. Good governance also helps make development assistance more effective by promoting transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the community. Strategies to build demand for better governance need to be based on careful analysis of local context, as the strategies adopted and the focus issues vary between and within countries.*

Some topics of interest under this sub-theme include but are not limited to:

- Promoting Participation and Accountability - *What strategies are being used to promote citizen participation in decision-making, and accountability of decision-makers to citizens?*
- Civil Society and Donors – *Civil society can be a driver of good governance. How can donors support civil society without imposing external priorities?*
- Customary Governance and Civil Society in Pacific Island Countries – *Mapping of donor engagement with customary groups/structures and analysis of how these groups/structures can contribute to improved governance in Pacific island countries.*

Documentation applicants should be aware of:

“Australian Aid: Approaches to Building Demand for Better Governance” (AusAID – available at http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/better_governance.pdf)

“Australia’s Overseas Aid Program Budget 2007-08” (AusAID – available at <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/budget/budget07/default.cfm>) (pp. 14-16)

Dr Haley, Nicole, “Strengthening Civil Society to Build Demand for Better Governance in the Pacific: Literature Review and Analysis of Good Practice and Lessons Learned”, (State, Society, and Governance in Melanesia Centre, ANU, 2008, available at http://rspas.anu.edu.au/papers/melanesia/research/SSGM_Build_Demand_Better_Governance.pdf)

Sub-theme: Fragile States and Peace Building

Australia, along with many other aid donors, uses the term fragile states to describe states that lack the political will and/or capacity to provide the core functions needed to reduce poverty and promote development. The Australian aid program aims to foster functioning and effective states in the region and balances front-end basic service delivery (health, education, law and justice), with longer term support for governance and reform to help build service delivery capacity and provide an environment to support employment and economic growth. With nearly 50% of Australia’s aid program directed to countries with limited government capacity and vulnerable to conflict, it is essential for the Australian Government to work with partners to improve the impact of development assistance in these countries.

Some topics of interest under this sub-theme include, but are not limited to:

- Sequencing development assistance to fragile states & conflict prone/post-conflict-states
- Fragility and economic turnaround
- Community Driven Development
- Youth
- Capacity building in weak capacity environments

Documentation applicants should be aware of:

World Bank CPIA country ratings - see World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA) website – ‘Fragile States: List of Fragile States (2007)’

9. HEALTH

The Health priority theme includes 2 sub-themes: **Health Systems Strengthening** and **HIV**. Total combined Health theme funding is AUD 1,000,000 per year for up to three years, for approximately 6 to 8 projects.

Sub-theme: Health Systems Strengthening

The research focus is on health systems strengthening with a particular focus on those aspects that will improve the delivery of basic health services.

Within the countries of focus for Australia's aid program, health outcomes are generally not improving and the need for action is compelling. The lack of functioning health systems constrains the delivery of improved services. Health systems encompass issues such as policy, planning, and management; health sector financing; health workforce management; health sector monitoring and evaluation; plus the infrastructure and information systems that support health systems. Health service delivery refers to the way inputs such as finance, staff, treatment, equipment and drugs all deliver a range of health interventions to citizens seeking access to health care. Improving health service delivery depends on having key resources that are well organised and well managed, as well as fostering the demand for improved services.

This grant round will continue the priority focus on i) health systems financing and organisation; ii) human resources for health; and iii) demand side factors. However, additional focus is on their link with improving the delivery of basic health services:

- 1. reaching the poor and vulnerable;*
- 2. improving the quality of basic health service delivery;*
- 3. increasing the efficiency of health services.*

Eligibility Criteria under the Health Systems Strengthening sub-theme

- Research proposals **must** address one or more of the three health systems strengthening foci.
- Research proposals **must** be focused on countries where AusAID is engaged in the health sector in the Asia Pacific region. The main countries of engagement are: PNG, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, East Timor, Vanuatu, Fiji, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Multicountry and regional proposals will be accepted.

Selection criteria under the Health Systems Strengthening sub-theme

Research proposals will be assessed against whether the research:

- Is focused on and relevant to any one or more of the following settings:
 - poor and vulnerable populations;
 - fragile states;
 - small island states;
 - low resource settings.
- Has broader implications and relevance for AusAID's health systems strengthening engagement in the Asia Pacific region.
- Has links with ongoing delivery of AusAID funded health activities.
- Has the ability to influence policy, practice, or service delivery.

The three priority foci under this sub-theme are:

1. Health Systems Financing and Organisation.
2. Human Resources for Health.
3. Demand-side factors (including health service provider and consumer perspectives).

Documentation applicants should be aware of:

Helping Health Systems Deliver, a Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Health, AusAID 2006.

Relevant national health policies, strategies and/or plans.

Sub-theme: HIV

This research will support efforts in the Asia Pacific region to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG 6) of halting and reversing the spread of HIV by 2015.

Some countries in the region have stabilized their HIV epidemics but the overall trend in Asia Pacific is upwards. AusAID has identified three priority foci in relation to HIV:

i) Community based prevention: New challenges arising for HIV prevention, and lessons learned from prevention among populations at greatest risk in Asia Pacific. Research should increase our understanding of innovative approaches to prevention (e.g. by considering factors relevant to risk and vulnerability) and inform the design of effective responses

ii) Gender: Improving understanding of the relevance of gender to causes and consequences of the HIV epidemic in Asia Pacific; and

iii) National response models: Research on factors affecting national responses in Asia Pacific that have constrained or supported effective leadership, policies and programs.

Fundamental to reversing the spread of HIV is a sustained prevention response and AusAID considers prevention to be the cornerstone of our International HIV Strategy. We are therefore interested in research that supports an intensified prevention response including analysis of HIV risks and vulnerabilities within a community context and frameworks for developing community based prevention.

Gender remains one of the under-explored dimensions of the epidemic. In their early stages, HIV epidemics often primarily affect men, particularly male injecting drug users, men who have sex with men and clients of sex workers. But women and girls are increasingly affected as epidemics progress. Prevention and care responses need to be better informed by gender analysis.

Finally, to reverse the epidemic requires a clearly defined national response that provides leadership and coordinates the efforts of the key players including donors, multilateral agencies, NGOs and relevant Ministries. Understanding better ways in which to organize national responses to ensure leadership on the issue and to achieve more effective policies and programs remains a key challenge in the region.

Eligibility Criteria under the HIV sub-theme

- Proposals must focus on one or more of the following: PNG, Indonesia, Pacific island nations, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Burma, China (particularly Guangxi and Yunnan), and East Timor.

Selection criteria under the HIV sub-theme

Research proposals will be assessed against whether the research:

- has broad strategic implications and relevance for AusAID's HIV engagement in the Asia Pacific region;
- has links with ongoing delivery of AusAID funded activities or potential to inform the design of new AusAID activities; and
- is aligned with the research priorities of the national HIV strategy/plan of a partner country.

Where partner country institutions are involved in the research, proposals should specify how the capacity of local researchers will be built as a result of the proposed project.

Multi-country comparative studies, interdisciplinary studies and studies that adopt approaches that build the capacity of local researchers will be given preference.

The three priority foci under the HIV sub-theme are:

1. Community based prevention.
2. Improving understanding of the relevance of gender to causes and consequences of the HIV epidemic in Asia Pacific.
3. National response models.

Documentation applicants should be aware of:

Meeting the Challenge: Australia's International HIV/AIDS Strategy, AusAID 2004

Helping Health Systems Deliver, a Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Health, AusAID 2006.

Relevant national HIV/AIDS policies, strategies and/or plans.